

MONTHLY NOTICES

OF THE

ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY.

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JUNE 14, 1901.

No. 8

E. B. KNOBEL, Esq., Vice-President, in the Chair.

Francis William Crook, B.A., Barrister-at-Law, 4 Overcliff,
Gravesend, Kent ;

Frank Lowman, B.A., Lecturer in Science, St. John's College,
Battersea, S.W. ; and

Charles Nielsen, 15 Cliff Terrace, Hartlepool,

were balloted for and duly elected Fellows of the Society.

The following candidate was proposed for election as a Fellow of the Society, the name of the proposer from personal knowledge being appended :—

William John Greenstreet, M.A. (Cantab.), Head Master,
Marling School, Stroud, Gloucestershire (proposed by
Charles T. Whitmell).

Seventy-one presents were announced as having been received since the last meeting, including, amongst others :—

Rev. S. B. Burnaby, Elements of the Jewish and Muham-
madan Calendars, presented by the author ; W. de Sitter,
Discussion of heliometer observations of *Jupiter's* satellites made
by Sir D. Gill and W. H. Finlay, presented by the author ;
Taylor's General Catalogue of Stars for 1835'0, revised and
edited by A. M. W. Downing, presented by the editor ; *Astro-
nomischer Jahresbericht*, Band 2, 1900, herausgegeben von

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W. F. Wislicenus, presented by the editor ; *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*, vol. 27, presented by W. C. Johnson ; Photographs of the great Comet, 1901, presented by Sir David Gill.

The Great Comet of 1901, as observed at the Royal Observatory, Cape of Good Hope. By Sir David Gill, K.C.B., F.R.S., His Majesty's Astronomer at the Cape.

On April 24, at 2^h 54^m P.M., a telegram was received as follows :—

From Arthur Hill, Queenstown.

Royal Observatory, Cape Town :

"Saw a Comet this morning at 5 o'clock due East."

The following morning (April 24, astronomical time), the comet was seen by Mr. Innes, Mr. Lunt, and myself. Its position was first observed by Mr. Innes with the 10-inch guiding telescope of the astrographic equatorial, and afterwards by Messrs. Lunt and Innes with the 18-inch refractor of the McClean telescope. The nucleus was visible for some time after sunrise, but could not be followed as far as meridian passage. The observed places on this date depend on readings of the R.A. and Decl. circles, of which the index-errors were found by observations of the planet *Mercury*. The places given are corrected for refraction. On April 25 (astronomical date) there was dense fog on the eastern horizon, and the comet could not be seen. On April 26 similar circle observations to those of April 24 were secured with great difficulty by Messrs. Innes and Lunt on account of the strong light of the background of the sky.

On April 27 Mr. Lunt pointed the 6-inch equatorial to the ridge of the distant Hottentot Hollands Mountains at the expected setting in declination, and so saw the comet enter the field over the mountains, and thus obtained some readings of the circles, but the results are of doubtful value.

Cloudy weather intervened from April 27 till May 3, when the first accurate series of observations was secured by Mr. Innes, and no subsequent opportunity was lost by him. The preliminary results of reduction of all his observations are attached, together with an approximate orbit derived by him from his observations of May 3, 5 and 7.

Mr. Innes's drawing represents the comet as seen with the naked eye on April 24, the formation of the head and of the portions of the tail near the head being drawn with the assistance of the telescope.